THE NIGHTMARE WHO COULD NOT DIE!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE HEAP

SKYWALD COMICS

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THE BEASTS OF BEDLAM BATTLE FOR A SLEEPING BEAUTY!

THE HEAP CONFRONTS MAN'S MOST GHOULISH FOE... SINISTER SCYTHE!

STIRRED FROM SLEEP BY THE WHISPERING WIND...A FIELD OF DAISIES ARDENTLY LIFTS ITS HEADS BEFORE THE CARESSING TOUCH OF THE BEAUTIFUL MAID WITH THE FLAXEN HAIR...
SUDDENLY--A SATANIC SNARL SLASHES AT THE NAKED HEART OF THE DEFENSELESS BLONDE BEAUTY--
IN HER STUMBLING FLIGHT OF SHEER TERROR--THE FEARFUL GIRL FAINTS--AND TRIPS HEADLONG INTO THE ENGULFING EMBRACE OF THE EERIE ENIGMA BANISHED FROM THE DARKEST PIT OF HELL ITSELF--THE HORRENDOUS HEAP!
AAARRGH!
GROWRRR!
OHHHH...!
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INTRODUCING...
HEAP

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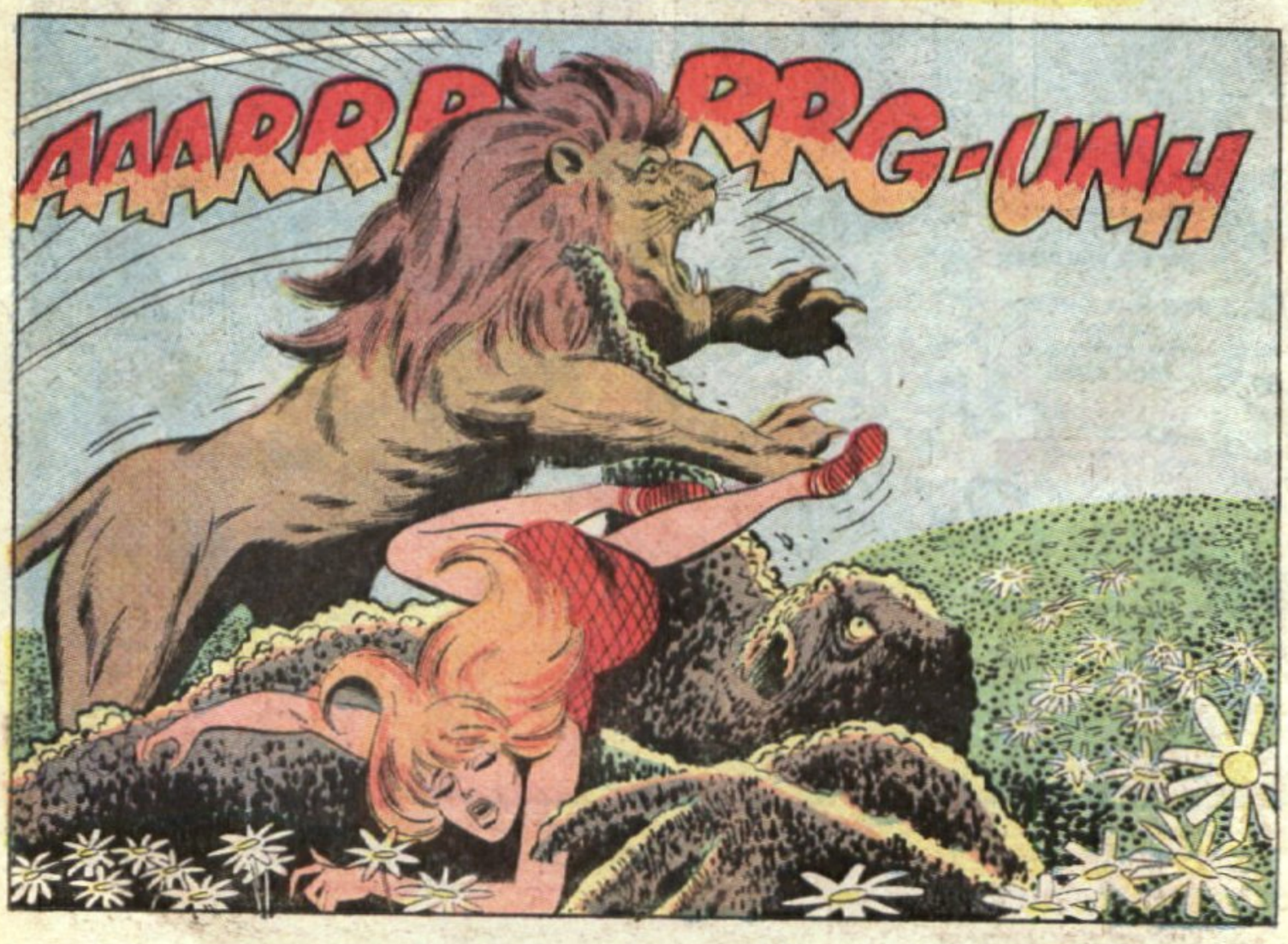
YELLOW EYES GLEAMING--

AWKWARDLY PINNED BY THE WEIGHT OF THE UNCONSCIOUS BEAUTY--*THE HEAP* LUNGES--



FINALLY HURLING THE LIFELESS BODY OF THE JUNGLE ASSASSIN FROM HIM AS IF IT WERE A RAG DOLL

THE LION'S DEAD! ...THE GIRL'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS--BUT SAFE! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HER SIGHT BEFORE SHE COMES TO AND SEES ME!
I MAY NOT LOOK IT--BUT I'M HUMAN! I DON'T WANT MY FACE TO CAUSE HER NIGHTMARES! I COULDN'T STAND HER SCREAMING AT ME LIKE I WAS A GHOUL!

GENTLY LOWERING HIS FRAGILE BURDEN TO THE GROUND...THE HEAP CANNOT RESIST THE TUGGING OF HIS IMPRISONED HEART...

IT'S LONELY BEING ON THE RUN! HUNTED THROUGH NO FAULT OF MINE! SHUNNED BY EVERYONE LIKE I WAS A LIVING PLAGUE ESCAPED FROM A GRAVEYARD!

DEEP WITHIN THE INNERMOST DEPTHS OF EVERY MAN--A BEAST LIES CAGED! BUT WHAT LIES TRAPPED IN THE HEART OF A BEAST? DEFYING ALL LAWS OF CREATION, THE HEAP EXISTS...AND YET LONGS TO DIE! FOR IN LIVING, HE FACES THE FEAR OF MANKIND... AND RUNS TO ESCAPE THE...

SHADOWS OF SATAN!

OH MY GOD! SHE'S OPENING HER EYES!
WHY DID I HAVE TO STAY HERE FOR ONE LAST LOOK AT HER--TO CARRY AWAY IN MY HEART?
NOW THE MEMORY OF MY FACE WILL SPLIT HER BRAIN APART--AND IT WILL BE MY FAULT!
HER FINGERS--FLUTTERING OVER MY FACE LIKE THE WINGS OF A BIRD--HER EYES--STARING PAST MY UGLINESS, WITHOUT FLINCHING?
THIS POOR GIRL'S BLIND!
BLIND...THANK THE FATES FOR THAT!
WHAT... HAPPENED?! I SEEM TO REMEMBER A ROAR...AN ANIMAL SOUND! WHO ARE YOU? WHY WON'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?
I'VE NEVER TOUCHED A FACE LIKE YOURS BEFORE? A VERY STRANGE FACE...THE FACE OF A MAN WHO RISKED HIS LIFE FOR ME--A STRANGER WITHOUT A SOUND!
I HEAR YOUR BREATHING--YOU'RE IN PAIN! SUFFERING SILENTLY BECAUSE OF ME!
I CAN HEAR YOUR HEART POUNDING LIKE A DRUM ABOUT TO BURST! THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T SPEAK! YOU'RE STIFLING YOUR PAIN!
I CAN'T STAND IT! LET ME TAKE YOU TO MY GUARDIAN? WE LIVE NEAR HERE, ON THE MOORS. HE'S A FAMOUS SCIENTIST. HE'LL HEAL YOU!
NO ONE CAN HEAL ME...EVEN DEATH AVOIDS ME!... BLINDNESS ALONE SHIELDS YOU FROM ME!

SUDDENLY...
HEY! THERE'S RAV... AND HE'S DEAD! STILL, IT'S TOO LATE FOR THOSE HE MAULED ESCAPING FROM THE CIRCUS!
BUT WHAT ON EARTH COULD HAVE HAD THE POWER TO WRING A LION'S NECK?
THERE'S YOUR ANSWER, LARRY! I THINK I'M HAVIN' A BAD DREAM!
NO YINCE! IT'S FOR REAL! WHAT D'YA THINK, RICK?
THE THING'S DOWNWIND! FLIP YOUR SAFETIES OFF AN' LET'S GET CLOSER! BEFORE THE WIND CHANGES AND IT CAN SNIFF US!
THAT MONSTER'S CAPTURED A GIRL!
IT'LL TEAR HER APART LIKE SHE WAS A PAPER DOLL!
DRILL IT!
BAM! BAM! BAM!
TZIIING!
BEEANG!
ZULUUNG!

AS THE BRUTAL IMPACT OF THE BULLETS WRENCHES *THE HEAP* AROUND...
...HIS EYES BLAZE LIKE VOLCANIC FIRES...
A SUBTERRANEAN TIDAL WAVE OF PRIMEVAL PROTEST THUNDERS FROM DEEP INSIDE HIM...
OUR SLUGS ARE SINKIN' RIGHT INTO THAT HEAP! NOT EVEN A BULL ELEPHANT CAN TAKE THIS PUNISHMENT!
HAAARRAAGHH
BAM!
BAM! BAM!
BAM! BAM!
THAT THING SHOULD BE COLD MEAT BY NOW--BUT IT KEEPS ON COMIN'!
BDAM! BAM!
THROUGH A BLAZING HAZE OF AGONY *THE HEAP'S* MASSIVE HANDS SURGE AT THE ASTONISHED HUNTERS.
KRUNNNGG...
BAM! BAM!
THAT GHOUL'S CRUSHING THE RIFLES LIKE THEY WERE BREADSTICKS!
BUT *IT* CAN'T KEEP ON SWALLOWIN' MY SLUGS AT POINTBLANK RANGE WITHOUT CHOKIN' ON LEAD POISON!

YOU'RE THINKIN' LIKE HE HAS A HEART!
CARVE THIS FREAK'S HEART OUT BEFORE IT SQUEEZES US TO A PULP!
BAM!
BAM!
I'VE GOT A HEART!
THUDD..
STRANGER--! THOSE SHOTS-- THIS TERRIBLE SILENCE! WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? I KNOW YOU'RE THERE--I CAN FEEL IT--AS IF OUR HEARTS WERE ONE--BEATING TOGETHER!
DON'T LEAVE ME!
STAY--PLEASE? YOU'RE HURT--LET ME HELP YOU?
STAY--? AND HAVE THOSE HUNTERS TELL YOU I'M A MONSTER--WHEN THEY COME TO?
STAY--AND WATCH YOUR SIGHTLESS EYES DROWN IN HORROR?
NO BULLET OR KNIFE COULD RIP OUT THAT DEEP A WOUND! NO! --NO--NO!

STUMBLING AWAY FROM THE BLIND BEAUTY... THE HEAP CANNOT ESCAPE HIS TORMENTING THOUGHTS OF THE PAST...
NOT SO LONG AGO I WASN'T JUST A HEAP OF MONSTROUS FLESH --BUT A MAN--JIM ROBERTS--A PILOT--TASTING LIFE AND LOVE LIKE EACH DAY WAS FOREVER... UNTIL--
TURBULENCE JINXING MY CONTROLS!
STICK'S FROZEN!
CAN'T PULL UP!
MY GOD--
THE TURBULENCE TOSSED MY CROP DUSTER MILES OFF COURSE...BEFORE FLINGING IT EARTHWARDS LIKE A MAD GIANT WEARY OF A TOY!
I'M GOING TO CRASH!
HEAVEN HELP ME! THIS IS THE END!
CRAAAASHH!!
USA CHEMICAL WARFARE DEPOT X-G
CONDEMNED! EXTREMELY DANGEROUS! OFF LIMITS! TO ALL PERSONNEL!

BUT IT WAS ONLY THE START... CONSCIOUSNESS ESCAPED ME...
TIME PASSED...ALL ABOUT ME CHEMICALS BUBBLED OVER!
FINALLY I AWOKE... WET, TIRED... BUT ALIVE!

I SURGED OUT OF THE VAULT OF HORROR IN A CRIMSON TIDE OF DELIRIUM...
MY PORES ARE LIKE SUCTION PADS!
EITHER I'M HAVING A NIGHTMARE--OR I CAN CRAWL UP AND DOWN WALLS LIKE CATERPILLAR!
THEN I SAW MYSELF REFLECTED IN THE GOGGLES OF THE GAS-HELMETED GUARD RUNNING UP...
HALT!...HALT! OR I FIRE!
K-POW! POW! POW!
THE SLUGS THAT RIPPED INTO MY FLESH MELTED BEFORE A SEARING REALIZATION...
I'M NOT HAVING A NIGHTMARE! I AM A NIGHTMARE!
POW POW POW POW POW!
K-POW!
A BLAZING VOLLEY FROM OTHER GUARDS TORCHED INTO ME--BUT DIDN'T STOP ME...NEITHER DID THE LACERATING TEETH OF THE BARBED WIRE, NOR THE LETHAL ELECTRICITY!
ZZZT T...!
TZLLLING!
KRANNG!
BEOW!
DANGER 100,000 VOLTS
VIP VIP VIP
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO KILL ME?
WHAT?-- WHAT-- WHAT?

I RAN INTO THE FOG TO ESCAPE THE HORROR THAT I HAD BECOME... MY SEARING WOUNDS HISSING CLOSED ...CHOKING IN MY OWN SECRET BLOOD BUT NOT DROWNING...UNTIL I TOPPLED IN A HEAP IN AN ABANDONED GRAVEYARD...WHERE SLOWLY...OUT OF THE SULPHUROUS MIST...
DEATH!
YOU HAVE COME FOR ME AFTER ALL! SPARING ME FROM BEING DOOMED TO WALK THE EARTH--A LIVING NIGHT-MARE--FOR ALL ETERNITY!
I WAS SURROUNDED BY GRISLY LAUGHTER--LIKE THE RATTLING OF MUSTY BONES...
HEE! HEE! HEE! LEAVE IT TO YOU, MASTER SCYTHE--TO FIND A NEW MEMBER FOR OUR BAND!
ANIMAL, VEGETABLE OR MINERAL! WHAT IS IT, MASTER SCYTHE?
A PARIAH! OUTCAST! LEPER! ABOMINATION!
YOU BELONG TO US NOW! SATAN'S SHADOWS, THE FREAKS!
WE COME OUT OF THE DARKNESS! NIGHTMARES SPRINGING TO LIFE! AVENGING OURSELVES ON THE WORLD WHICH SHUNS US!
OUR DEEDS ARE UNSPEAKABLE! OUR CRIMES LISTED ON POLICE BLOTTERS AS UNSOLVED! FOR NO ACCUSER LIVES TO NAME US!
I--? ONE OF YOU?
WELCOME! YOU ARE ONE OF US! FOREVER!

MY BRAIN EXPLODED IN A WHITE HOT FLASH OF ATOMIC AGONY!
NO!--NO! I'M NOT A FREAK! I'M HUMAN!
YOU--HUMAN? LOOK INTO MY EYES AND SEE YOURSELF AS YOU REALLY ARE! A FOUL HEAP! EVEN HYENAS AND VULTURES WOULD SHRINK FROM TOUCHING YOU!
I'M HUMAN! NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY I'M H-UUUHHM...
SWIISHH!
IF YOU'RE HUMAN... BLEED!
MASTER SCYTHE IS NEVER WRONG! IF YOU'RE NOT ONE OF US--PROVE IT BY DYING!
HEE!--HEEE!
ONLY THE DEEPEST PIT OF HELL COULD HOLD SUCH SATANIC SPORT--RINGING ME WITH GHOULISH GLEE!
SWISH!
IT'S NOT A FREAK LIKE US!
JUST A HEAP THAT'S GOING TO LOSE IT'S HEAD!
HEH-HEH-HEH-

IN MY LUNGING FRENZY...
DESPERATELY, FUMBLINGLY--I LOCKED NIGHTMARE AND REALITY TOGETHER!
HEE!..HEE!
I SMASHED INSANELY AT MASTER SCYTHE AND HIS UNHOLY MUTANTS--BUT THEY MELTED BEFORE ME IN THE MACABRE MIST LIKE MOCKING FRAGMENTS OF DELIRIUM...
YOU CAN NO MORE ESCAPE ME--THAN YOU CAN SHED YOUR SKIN!
PEOPLE WILL RECOIL FROM YOU IN DISGUST! EARTH HOLDS NO HIDING PLACE FOR YOU!
SOONER OR LATER YOU MUST JOIN US!
HEE!..HEE!..
HEE!..HEE!
HEE!..HEE!

A BURNING TORRENT WELLED UP FROM MY ABYSSAL EYES...

IF I WEREN'T HUMAN--COULD I STILL SHED TEARS?

THE HEAP'S AGONIZING THOUGHTS OF THE PAST WHIRL TO AN END--AS HE FLEES FROM THE BESEECHING BLIND GIRL HE HAD BEFRIENDED...

NO! SOMEWHERE...SOMEHOW...THERE MUST BE A SCIENTIFIC GENIUS WHO CAN REVERSE THE CHEMICAL ANARCHY THAT HAS TAKEN POSSESSION OF MY BODY--AND CHANGE ME BACK INTO A WHOLE MAN AGAIN!

STRANGER--WAIT! WAIT! PLEASE!

THE LEERING FATES DRIVE THE HEAP FOR HOURS...ACROSS THE MOANING MOORS...IN A CHAOTIC CIRCLE...UNTIL...

DOCTOR FRANKENSTEIN--YOU'RE A ***GENIUS!*** WHEN WILL YOU OPERATE ON ME AND ***CURE MY BLINDNESS?*** YOU PROMISED--BEFORE MY MOTHER DIED!

DON'T BOTHER ME WITH YOUR PETTY COMPLAINTS, SYBL! I'VE REFRIGERATED THE NECESSARY CORNEAL TRANSPLANTS FOR YOU!

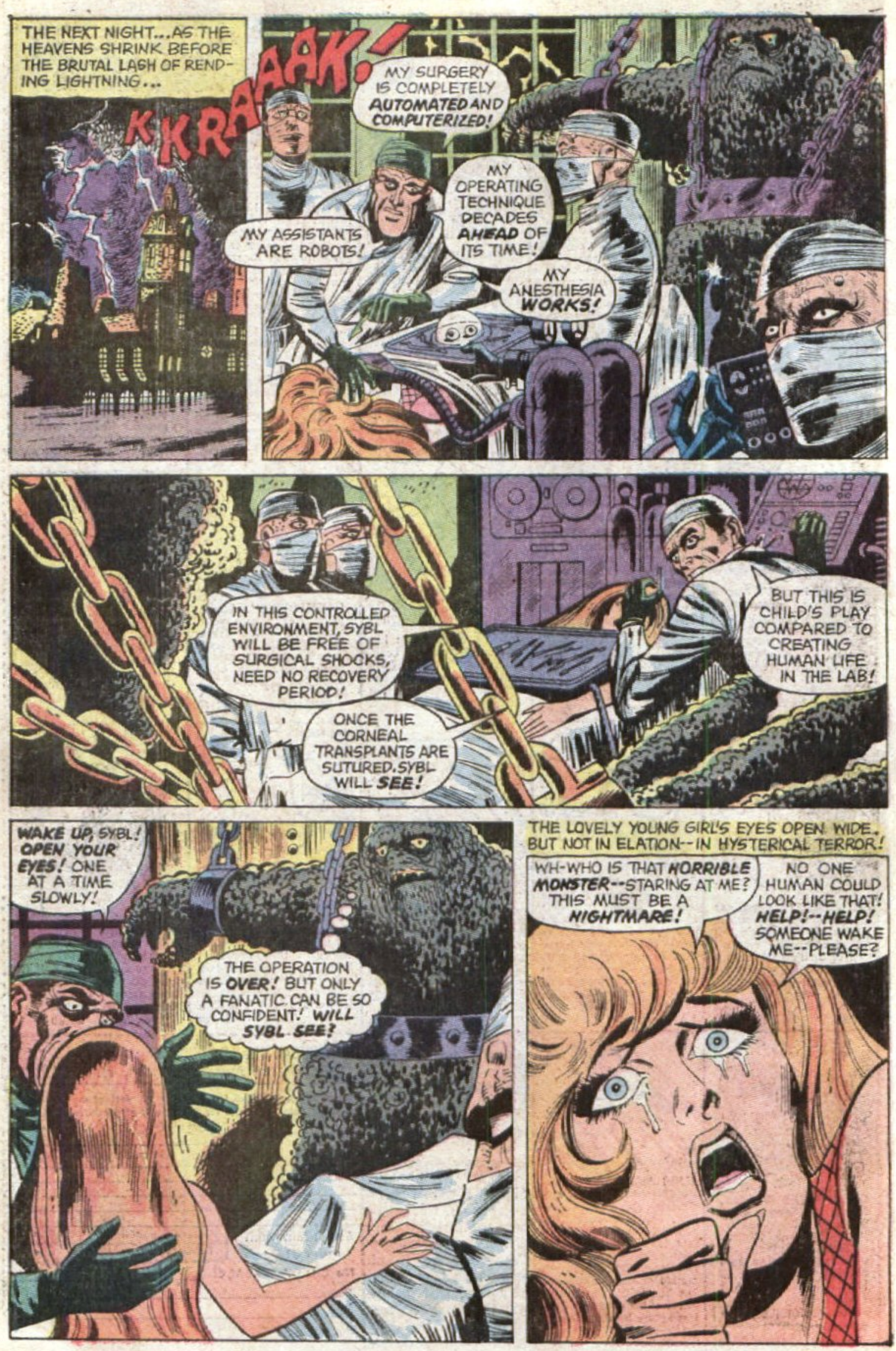
BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO ***WAIT!***

I'M TIRED OF ALWAYS LIVING UNDER THE SHADOW OF MY ANCESTOR ***--BARON FRANKEN-STEIN!***

WHEN I DUPLICATE HIS FEAT OF CREATING LIFE IN THE LABORATORY--I WILL BE ***IMMORTAL!***

I CAN'T WASTE TIME WITH YOU UNTIL I SUCCEED! ***LEAVE ME!***

SECONDS AFTER SYBL LEAVES...
AAAGHH!
WHA...! AM I DREAMING? WHAT MATTER OF CREATURE IS THIS?!
FEVERISHLY THE HEAP SCRAWLS HIS UNSPOKEN PLEA...
I'M JIM ROBERTS - A PILOT, I CRASHED INTO A STORAGE TANK OF CONDEMNED CHEMICALS! INSTEAD OF DYING - I TURNED INTO THIS MONSTROSITY! FOR GOD'S SAKE MAKE ME A MAN AGAIN
YOU'RE REAL! HUMAN! INCREDIBLE!
WITH EVER INCREASING ANXIETY, THE HEAP DAUBS HIS WORDS ON THE LABORATORY WALL USING HIS OWN MYSTERIOUS BODY FLUID FOR INK!
AND YOUR WARD - SYBL! SO YOUNG - SO BEAUTIFUL DON'T LET HER WALK IN DARKNESS! OPERATE RESTORE HER SIGHT! WE'LL BOTH BLESS YOU
A MONSTER WITH A HEART! WITH FEELINGS!
FAR SURPASSING THE CREATURE MY ANCESTOR CREATED IN HIS LABORATORY.
I COULD SPEND A LIFETIME AND FAIL TO FASHION ANYTHING LIKE YOU!
YOU SAY YOU'RE HUMAN? PROVE
PRETEND TO BE THE CREATURE I CREATED!
LET ME PRESENT YOU TO THE WORLD JUST AS BARON FRANKENSTEIN INTRODUCED HIS MONSTER - AND I WILL CURE SYBL'S BLINDNESS!
AFTER THE WORLD HAS APPLAUDED MY ACHIEVEMENT -- I WILL TREAT YOU. IS IT A BARGAIN?
HOW DO YOU KNOW I'LL KEEP MY END OF THE DEAL?
YOU DON'T!
BUT -- YOU'VE NO CHOICE! IF YOU HAVE -- LEAVE! YOU'RE FREE.. FREE!
IT'S A BARGAIN - IF YOU CURE SYBL FIRST!
I'LL OPERATE ON HER TOMORROW NIGHT!
MEANWHILE, IN KEEPING WITH TRADITION, I'LL KEEP YOU LOCKED UP! JUST AS THE BARON CHAINED HIS MONSTER!


THE NEXT NIGHT...AS THE HEAVENS SHRINK BEFORE THE BRUTAL LASH OF RENDING LIGHTNING...
KKRAAAK!
MY SURGERY IS COMPLETELY AUTOMATED AND COMPUTERIZED!
MY OPERATING TECHNIQUE DECADES AHEAD OF ITS TIME!
MY ASSISTANTS ARE ROBOTS!
MY ANESTHESIA WORKS!
IN THIS CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT, SYBL WILL BE FREE OF SURGICAL SHOCKS, NEED NO RECOVERY PERIOD!
ONCE THE CORNEAL TRANSPLANTS ARE SUTURED, SYBL WILL SEE!
BUT THIS IS CHILD'S PLAY COMPARED TO CREATING HUMAN LIFE IN THE LAB!
WAKE UP, SYBL! OPEN YOUR EYES! ONE AT A TIME SLOWLY!
THE OPERATION IS OVER! BUT ONLY A FANATIC CAN BE SO CONFIDENT! WILL SYBL SEE?
THE LOVELY YOUNG GIRL'S EYES OPEN WIDE. BUT NOT IN ELATION--IN HYSTERICAL TERROR!
WH-WHO IS THAT HORRIBLE MONSTER--STARING AT ME? THIS MUST BE A NIGHTMARE!
NO ONE HUMAN COULD LOOK LIKE THAT! HELP!--HELP! SOMEONE WAKE ME--PLEASE?

THE TERRIFIED GIRL'S SCREAMS TEAR AT THE HEAP'S SHOCKED HEART!
RRRIIIP...
I MUST HAVE BEEN MAD TO THINK ANYONE COULD LOOK AT ME WITHOUT SHUDDERING!
AARGGG!
STOP THAT THING!--BUT DON'T DESTROY IT!
THE HEAP'S BRAIN ERUPTS LIKE AN EXPLODING VOLCANO!
CAN'T BEAR HER EYES ON ME--LIKE WELLS OF HORROR! HER SCREAMS OF SHEER TERROR!
GOT TO GET OUT OF HER SIGHT--BEFORE SHE GOES INTO SHOCK!
CRASH!
THOSE SOUNDS?
I'VE HEARD THEM BEFORE? MOANING --STIFLING PAIN! NOT SAYING A WORD!
THAT THING SAVED MY LIFE! MY GOD--WHAT HAVE I DONE! WAIT--!
KKRAAAKKK!
AN ANIMAL IS PUT OUT OF ITS MISERY! WHY NOT ME? IF THERE'S MERCY IN THE HEAVENS-- DESTROY ME! NOW!

AS THE RANTING HEAP RACES BLINDLY INTO THE MENACING MOORS--BLAZING LIGHTNING STRIKES HIM!
I CURSE THE FATES FOR KEEPING ME ALIVE!
I'M A MAN--NOT A MONSTER!
GOD OR DEVIL STOP PLAYING WITH ME AS IF I WERE A MINDLESS TOY!
DESTROY M--
KRAAAK
LIKE A HUMAN TORCH WILDLY WHIPPED BY THE WIND INTO SEETHING CINDERS...
SINISTER SILENCE...THEN...UNDER THE SHUDDERING STARE OF THE MOON...SLOWLY RISING LIKE A FEARFUL PHOENIX OUT OF HIS OWN ASHES...
I'M DOOMED TO LIVE ON! BUT WHY? FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
WHOSE INSTRUMENT AM I? WHOSE HAND IS MOVING ME? GOD'S OR THE DEVIL'S? WHEN WILL I FIND OUT? WHEN? WHEN? WHEN?
DON'T MISS THE EERIE ENIGMA'S NEXT STARTLING ADVENTURE--IN HIS AGONIZING QUEST TO FIND... A WAY BACK TO MANKIND!!
THE END-- OF THE BEGINNING!
THERE'S A HEAP LETTERS PAGE COMIN'-SEND TO HEAP OF MAIL, SKYWALD PUB. CO. 18 E 41 ST. N.Y.C. N.Y. 10017

SPANISH GOLD LAY ON THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA AND LEGEND HAD IT THAT IT WAS CURSED! IT WAS SAID THAT A MAN COULD CLAIM THE FORTUNE WHEN THE VAST OCEAN STRETCH BECAME A STRIP OF LAND... IMPOSSIBLE? PERHAPS YOU'LL CHANGE YOUR MIND WHEN YOU READ THE ADVENTURE OF

WHEN THE SEA GOES DRY!

A HEAP TALE OF THE UNUSUAL

PELICAN

ON THE LITTLE CARIBBEAN TOWN OF PORTO BELLO...

I GUESS WE'RE LICKED, DEAR! THIS TREASURE MAP OF OURS IS STRICTLY VOODOO TO ANY GUIDE AROUND HERE!

BUT WHY ARE THEY ALL SO AFRAID? IS IT BECAUSE OF THAT LEGEND?

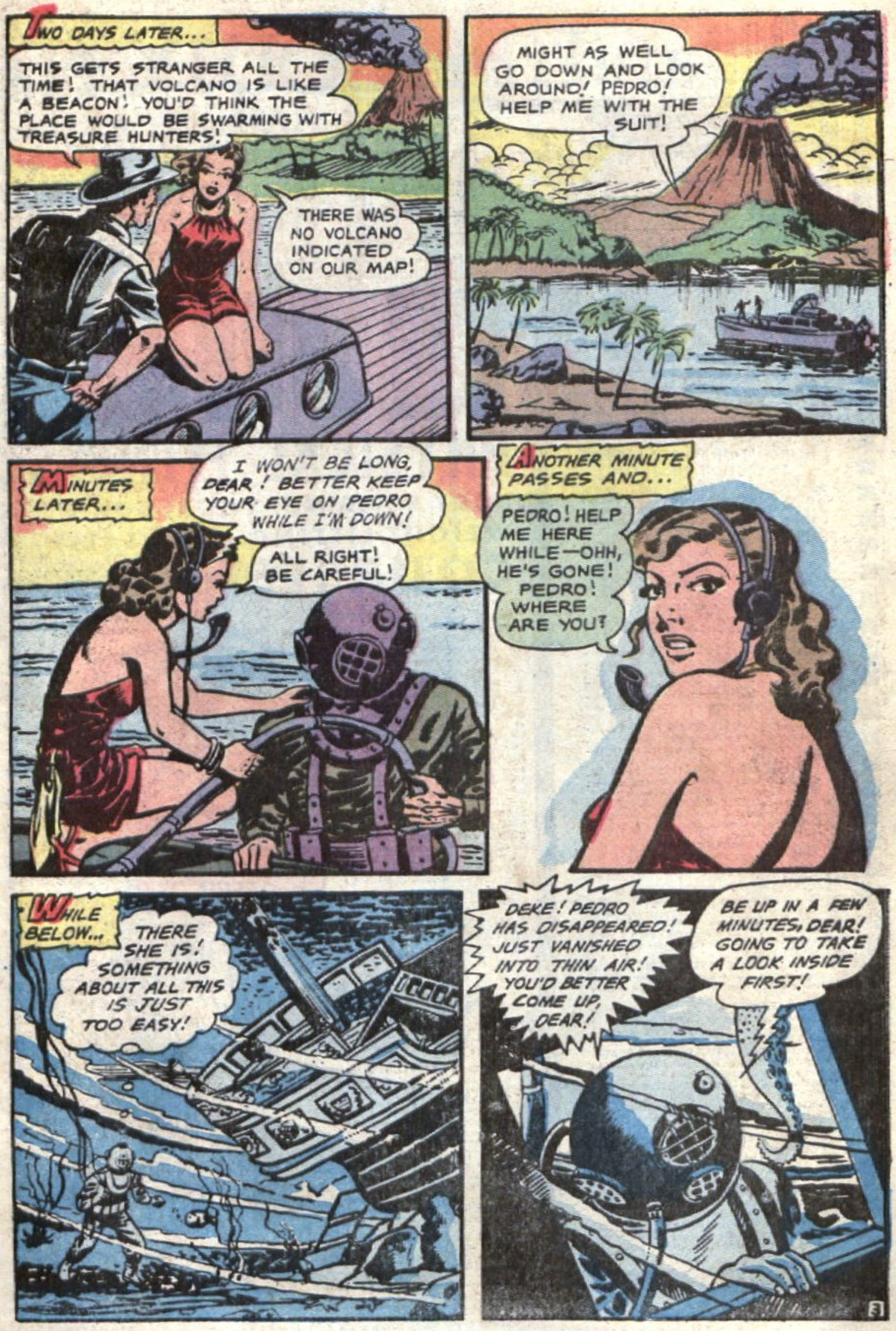
CAFE

PARDON, SEÑOR AND SEÑORA! YOU SEEK A GUIDE, I BELIEVE, TO HELP FIND THE AZTEC TREASURE!

HUH!

OH!

SURPRISE FADES AS ALL ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE! PEDRO, THE NEW GUIDE, IS TO TAKE THEM TO THE EXACT LAGOON WHERE THE TREASURE LIES! BUT DEKE AND MARGOT ARE PUZZLED...
THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT ALL THIS, MARGOT! EVERYBODY SEEMS TO KNOW ABOUT THAT TREASURE, STILL NO ONE TRIES TO GET IT! WE DIDN'T EVEN NEED THE MAP!
AND PEDRO IS SO STRANGE! HE SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY ONE WHO ISN'T AFRAID!
HE'S A WEIRD LOOKING CHARACTER! BUT AT LEAST HE SEEMS TO HAVE THE COURAGE THE OTHERS LACK!
MAYBE HE CAN EXPLAIN WHY NOBODY SEEMS INTERESTED IN THE GOLD?
ICAN
PEDRO DOES EXPLAIN...
YOU ARE WRONG, MY FRIENDS! EVERYONE IS INTERESTED IN THE AZTEC TREASURE! MANY HAVE TRIED TO GET IT IN THE PAST... SCORES OF THEM!
BUT WHAT HAPPENED? WHY IS THE GOLD STILL THERE?
DO NOT FORGET THE CURSE, MY FRIENDS! THEY DISAPPEARED... ALL OF THEM!
OH, THAT OLD STORY! DO YOU EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT?
PELICAN
I EXPECT YOU TO BELIEVE NOTHING! YOU ARE THE SORT WHO MUST SEE FOR YOURSELVES! THAT IS WHY I AM HERE!
WHA— WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YES — WHY AREN'T YOU AFRAID LIKE THE OTHERS?
I HAVE SAID ENOUGH! YOU WILL SEE IN TIME! NOW I WILL TAKE YOU TO THE LAGOON OF THE VOLCANO! THE SMOKE WILL GUIDE US!
2


TWO DAYS LATER...
THIS GETS STRANGER ALL THE TIME! THAT VOLCANO IS LIKE A BEACON! YOU'D THINK THE PLACE WOULD BE SWARMING WITH TREASURE HUNTERS!
THERE WAS NO VOLCANO INDICATED ON OUR MAP!
MIGHT AS WELL GO DOWN AND LOOK AROUND! PEDRO! HELP ME WITH THE SUIT!
MINUTES LATER...
I WON'T BE LONG, DEAR! BETTER KEEP YOUR EYE ON PEDRO WHILE I'M DOWN!
ALL RIGHT! BE CAREFUL!
ANOTHER MINUTE PASSES AND...
PEDRO! HELP ME HERE WHILE—OHH, HE'S GONE! PEDRO! WHERE ARE YOU?
WHILE BELOW...
THERE SHE IS! SOMETHING ABOUT ALL THIS IS JUST TOO EASY!
DEKE! PEDRO HAS DISAPPEARED! JUST VANISHED INTO THIN AIR! YOU'D BETTER COME UP, DEAR!
BE UP IN A FEW MINUTES, DEAR! GOING TO TAKE A LOOK INSIDE FIRST!

GAAAA—C-CUTTING OFF MY AIR!
OCTOPUS! MUST BE A G-GIANT!
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT THING! NO WONDER THE TREASURE IS STILL THERE!
HEY, MARGOT! GET ME UP—FAST!
WHAT'S WRONG, DEKE? DEKE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
DARLING! WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT'S DOWN THERE?
HELP ME GET THIS HELMET OFF!
WE CAN STOP KIDDING ABOUT THE CURSE, HONEY! I JUST SAW IT! UGH— WHAT A MONSTER!
4

BUT MARGOT REMAINS UNCONVINCED...
AFTER ALL, DARLING, IT WAS ONLY AN OCTOPUS! A MONSTER, YES, BUT YOU MUSTN'T TURN SUPERSTITIOUS! MAYBE WE CAN DESTROY IT!
BUT WHAT AN OCTOPUS! I DON'T KNOW, HONEY! MAYBE I AM BEING FOOLISH, BUT— HEY, WHERE'S PEDRO?
I TRIED TO TELL YOU! PEDRO IS GONE! VANISHED!
HUH! YOU JUST CAN'T VANISH OFF A BOAT!
SUDDENLY...
PARDON, SEÑOR AND SEÑORA! I WAS ON THE ISLAND AND HAD TROUBLE RETURNING!
YOU DID WHAT?
WHAT HAP-PENED!
PELICAN
SEE! A BARRACUDA ATTACKED ME! I WAS LUCKY TO WARD HIM OFF! HE ONLY SCRATCHED ME!
REMEMBER, PEDRO, WE'LL GLADLY GO BACK FOR A DOCTOR IF YOU WISH!
YOU ARE KIND, SEÑORA!
FUNNY! I HAVE THE ODDEST FEELING ABOUT PEDRO! BUT I'M MISTAKEN, OF COURSE! FOOLISH-NESS, THAT'S ALL IT IS...
YES, SEÑORA, YOU ARE KIND! SO I WOULD WARN YOU! GO BACK! LET THE AZTEC GOLD ALONE! MY ANCESTORS CURSED THE SPANIARDS—AND NO ONE SHALL HAVE THE GOLD UNTIL THE SEA TURNS TO DRY LAND! ASK YOUR HUSBAND WHAT HE SAW BELOW!
Y-YOUR ANCESTORS! THEN YOU ARE OF AZTEC BLOOD!
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THAT NIGHT DEKE AND MARGOT HAVE A BITTER ARGUMENT. DEKE ADMITS, FRANKLY, THAT HE IS AFRAID...
DEKE TRAVERS! WHY, Y-YOU'RE REALLY SCARED! I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD MARRY A COWARD!
I'M NO COWARD AND YOU KNOW IT! BUT THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON THAT I DON'T LIKE! LET'S GIVE IT UP, HONEY. PLEASE!
WE WON'T GIVE IT UP! WE'VE WORKED AND PLANNED TO GET THAT GOLD—AND I INTEND TO GET IT! AND NO SILLY OLD LEGEND OR CURSE IS GOING TO STOP ME!
MAYBE SHE'LL FEEL DIFFERENT IN THE MORNING! MEANTIME THERE'S NO USE TELLING HER MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT PEDRO! SHE WOULD SCORN ME AGAIN! I GUESS I COULDN'T BLAME HER, AT THAT...
MEANTIME ON DECK...
HMMM—I WONDER! YES, I CAN DO IT! I'LL GET PEDRO TO HELP ME! AND WHEN MORNING COMES, I'LL HAVE THE GOLD. DEKE WILL FEEL PRETTY SHEEPISH THEN!
NO, SEÑORA! DO NOT DO IT! YOUR HUSBAND IS WISE! LEAVE THE GOLD WHERE IT IS!
PEDRO! BUT H-HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING?
NOT YOU, TOO, PEDRO! I WON'T LISTEN! I'M GOING DOWN THERE NOW AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME! PUT THE AIR PUMP ON AUTOMATIC!
IF YOU INSIST, SEÑORA! PEDRO WILL NOT WARN YOU AGAIN!

HALF A HOUR LATER...
THERE! AND NO SIGN OF ANY MONSTER SQUID YET! MAYBE IT WAS JUST DEKE'S IMAGINATION!
THIS IS EASY! HOPE PEDRO DOESN'T FALL ASLEEP AND LET MY LINES TANGLE, THOUGH!
THE GOLD! MILLIONS OF IT! OH, IS DEKE GOING TO LOOK FOOLISH!
OHHHH!
FEAR SWEEPING THROUGH HER, MARGOT TURNS TO SEE...
YES! PEDRO! GUARDING THE GOLD OF MY ANCESTORS! I WARNED YOU! YOUR HUSBAND KNOWS! AND NOW I WILL STOP YOU AS I HAVE STOPPED THE OTHERS DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES! THE GOLD WILL REMAIN UNTIL THE SEA TURNS TO DRY LAND!
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ABOVE, DEKE IS AWAKENED BY A SERIES OF TERRIFIC EXPLOSIONS...
THE VOLCANO'S GOING TO BLOW UP! MARGOT! WHERE ARE YOU? PEDRO! MARGOT!
WHILE IN THE INKY DEPTHS, MARGOT IS STRUGGLING...
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! OH, WHY DIDN'T I LISTEN TO DEKE? I'LL NEVER ESCAPE!
SUDDENLY THE VERY WORLD EXPLODES...
FIGHTING THE SEA, DEKE REACHES LAND, AND...
MARGOT! HONEY! S-SHE'S STILL ALIVE, THANK GOODNESS! THE EXPLOSION RIPPED OFF THE HELMET, LET HER BREATHE!
THE CURSE! WHEN THE SEA TURNS TO DRY LAND! IT HAPPENED! A NEW MOUNTAIN WAS THRUST UP! I KNEW, WHEN I SAW THAT SCRATCHED HAND, THAT PEDRO WAS GUARDING THE GOLD! HE WAS ENDANGERING US TO SAVE THE GOLD! HAH-HAH — THAT'S GONE NOW. ALL OF IT, SCATTERED FOREVER. BUT I WONDER WHERE PEDRO IS...
PEDRO IS GONE... THE CURSE IS ENDED!!
The End

THE CURSE OF THE broken balcony!

BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING HERE! WHAT IS IT, PETE? WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?
AAAIIEEE!! JACK! DO SOMETHING! HELP! HELP!!
WHAT GHASTLY, MACABRE MYSTERY WAS THIS? JACK DARROW COULD SEE THAT HIS FRIEND, PETE LARKIN, WAS GRIPPED BY STARK TERROR! BUT OF WHAT WAS HE AFRAID? AT THE APPOINTED TIME, JACK DARROW KNEW! HE KNEW THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FROM... "THE CURSE OF THE BROKEN BALCONY!"
A HEAP TALE OF THE UNUSUAL
MY NAME IS JACK--JACK DARROW! I'M A TRAVELING SALESMAN--A NORMAL GUY, THE SORT OF FELLOW YOU'D THINK NOTHING WEIRD WOULD EVER HAPPEN TO! BUT SOMETHING DID! BELIEVE ME, IT DID!
I WAS VERY PLEASED WITH MYSELF THAT LATE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 31ST--I HAD FINISHED THE YEAR PROFITABLY, AND WAS LAUNCHING INTO NEW TERRITORY. I WAS DRIVING ALONG AN UNFAMILIAR ROAD, WHEN---
EVERYTHING'S CERTAINLY FINE! I--HELLO--THAT GUY SURE LOOKS IN TROUBLE!

I WAS STARTLED WHEN I REALIZED I KNEW HIM!---
WHY, HELLO! YOU'RE PETE LARKIN, AREN'T YOU ?
WHY, YES! WHO...?
HE'D BEEN A CLASSMATE OF MINE AT N.Y.U. TEN YEARS BEFORE!
IMAGINE BUMPING INTO YOU AFTER SO MANY YEARS! HOW ARE YOU, PETE ?
I'M WORRIED JACK! BUT I CAN'T RECALL WHY!
HE LOOKED AWFUL! I REMEMBERED THAT HE HAD BEEN A DELICATE SORT OF BOY IN COLLEGE. WE TALKED ABOUT OUR OLD COLLEGE DAYS---
NOTHING MUCH HAS HAPPENED TO ME SINCE, JACK! I--WELL, I'VE BEEN SICK QUITE A BIT!
YEAH? TOUGH LUCK!
HE LOOKED LIKE HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN!
I LIVE NEAR HERE,..ALONE!...WHOLE FAMILY'S OUT WEST!...I'M RESTING NOW--BOUGHT MYSELF A LITTLE HOUSE!
TOMORROW'S NEW YEAR'S. YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO DO, JACK ? I WAS THINKING,..WHY NOT STAY WITH ME ? WE CAN COOK UP SOME FUN!
I WAS PLANNING ON STAYING AT THE HOTEL IN ANNEDALE, BUT--WELL, OKAY, PETE--THANKS!
WHAT GRIM TRICK OF FATE MADE ME MEET HIM AND ACCEPT HIS INVITATION ?---
IT'S JUST A LITTLE WAY DOWN THIS ROAD--ISN'T MUCH OF A PLACE!... BETTER TAKE IT SLOW, ROAD GETS BAD HERE...

IT WAS A STRANGE OLD HOUSE! YOU'D THINK THAT NO ONE HAD LIVED IN IT FOR YEARS!---
I BOUGHT IT CHEAP, JACK!

HE LED ME UP A CREAKY, BROKEN-DOWN OLD STAIRWAY!
I-I'VE BEEN SO SICK I'VE BEEN NEGLECTING THE PLACE A LITTLE!

WHAT COULD I SAY? I WAS VERY SILENT AS I SAT UNEASILY IN THAT TOWER ROOM WITH HIM!--
MILK AND SANDWICHES OKAY, JACK? --I'M NOT MUCH OF A HOUSEKEEPER!
THAT'S FINE, PETE!
I'LL STAY A WHILE.. ...THEN BEAT IT!

IF ONLY I HAD TRIED TO LEAVE THEN! BUT I SAT THERE--FROZEN WITH A GROWING HORROR! WAS HE INSANE?---
SURE NICE TO HAVE YOU, JACK! GETS SO-- LONELY HERE! MAKES ME NERVOUS! HA, HA! YES, THAT'S MY TROUBLE--I'M SO NERVOUS!
LONELY? YES, I CAN IMAGINE!
HE'S TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED! BUT--WHY?

AT INTERVALS HE'D RUSH OUT TO THE LITTLE BALCONY, STAND FEARFULLY GAZING, THEN COME SHAKINGLY BACK TO ME!---
PETE! WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU AFRAID OF THIS BALCONY?
I-I GUESS SO! SOMETHING AWFUL HAPPENED HERE, JACK!...YEARS AGO! THEY TOLD ME ABOUT IT WHEN I BOUGHT THE HOUSE! THAT'S WHY THEY SOLD IT SO CHEAP!--NOBODY'D LIVE HERE!

THEY SAID A MURDER WAS COMMITTED HERE ONE NIGHT...I SHOULDN'T LIVE HERE! I GET TOO FRIGHTENED!
A MURDER? TELL ME ABOUT IT!

"IT SEEMS THERE WAS A YOUNG FELLOW DOWN ON HIS LUCK. ONE NIGHT IN A BAR AND GRILL, HE STRUCK UP AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH A MIDDLE-AGED ENGLISHMAN---"
WOW! WHAT A WAD! THIS OLD DUCK'S A TOTAL STRANGER AROUND HERE! IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM---!
THERE YOU ARE, MY GOOD MAN!
THANK YOU, SIR!
"THE KILLER HAD SEEN THIS OLD, DESERTED HOUSE! ON SOME PRETEXT HE LURED THE ENGLISHMAN HERE---"
I SAY! THIS IS AN ODD OLD PLACE!
MIGHTY INTERESTING! I'LL SHOW YOU!
"SOMEHOW HE GOT HIM OUT ON THE MOONLIT BALCONY!"
AND THEN--
I SAY! NOW, LOOK HERE, YOUNG MAN, I--?
AAAIIEEE!!
"THEN IN THE STRUGGLE--"
HELP! HELLPPP!!
"THE FALL KILLED HIM! THEN--"
NEARLY EIGHT HUNDRED BUCKS! I'LL BURY HIM IN THE CELLAR! NOBODY'LL EVER KNOW!
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"BUT WHEN THE KILLER GOT BACK, GLOATING OVER HIS LOOT---"
I--I JUST BURIED YOU! YOU--YOU'RE DEAD!! GET AWAY FROM ME-- YOU--YOU HORRIBLE THING! AAAAH!
HA! HA! NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!
NO! HELP! HELP!!
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, HA, HA!!
"AS HE FELL TO THE ROCKS, THESE WORDS RANG IN HIS EARS..."
YOUR PUNISHMENT-- NOT JUST TO DIE NOW! BUT AT THE END OF EACH YEAR YOU SHALL LIVE AGAIN FOR A DAY!--AND AT MIDNIGHT--DIE HERE AGAIN! YOUR PUNISHMENT--- NEVER TO END!
AT THE END OF EACH YEAR! DECEMBER 31ST--AT MIDNIGHT! AND THAT WAS-- NOW!!
BUT IT WON'T HAPPEN THIS TIME, WILL IT, JACK? D-DO SOMETHING! IT CAN'T HAPPEN AGAIN THIS YEAR!
WHA--?
BONG
HA, HA! YOUR TIME HAS COME, PETE!
TO LIVE AGAIN--- AND DIE AGAIN--- AND AGAIN, ON THROUGH THE YEARS!--HIS GHASTLY, HORRIBLE PUNISHMENT!
HA, HA, HA!!
NO! NO! AAGGH!
FOR A MOMENT I GAZED DOWN AT THE ROCKS! NOTHING WAS THERE! NOTHING WAS IN THE DESERTED OLD HOUSE--UNTIL THE END OF THE NEW YEAR WHICH NOW WAS BEGINNING!
THEN, SHUDDERING, I FLED!!
THE END

WHAT WEIRD, UNKNOWN POWER DOMINATED THE RICHEST BANKER OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM? IT WAS SO DIABOLIC THAT EVEN THE PSYCHIC GIRL FROM VENUS COULD NOT FATHOM IT! WHAT WAS IN THE BIG METAL BOX WHICH THE MARTIAN PASSENGER HAD IN HIS CABIN *ON* THE SPACE LINER? ALAN ALDANE FOUGHT TO SOLVE THE GRISLY MYSTERY OF THOSE TERRIFYING THINGS WHICH BROUGHT....

DEATH on the EARTH-MARS RUN!

ALAN--LISTEN! IT'S TICKING! A BOMB?!
GOT TO TAKE THAT CHANCE! STAND BACK, DUSTY!
NO! NO! DON'T OPEN IT! STOP! STOP!
A HEAP TALE OF THE UNUSUAL

THE FIRST OF THE WEIRD INCIDENTS ON FLIGHT 20 OF OUR EARTH-MARS RUN, CAME WHEN DUSTY FRANE, RADIO-HELIO OPERATOR OF THE SPACE LINER *STAR-DUST*, STOOD WITH ME WATCHING PASSENGERS COME ABOARD...

HEY, YOU FELLOWS! WHAT IS THAT?
BELONGS TO SET GROF! WE GOT ORDERS TO PUT IT IN HIS CABIN!
SET GROF! I'VE HEARD ABOUT HIM! PURSER SAYS HE'S A RICH MARTIAN INVENTOR!

THERE'S SET GROF! HE SURE SEEMS WORRIED ABOUT THAT BOX!
IT'S ONE OF HIS INVENTIONS HE WON'T TALK ABOUT IT!
CAREFUL WITH THAT BOX! I WANT IT PUT IN MY CABIN!

MOMENTS LATER...
LOOK, THERE'S ROBERT SANTLEY, THE BANKER! THEY SAY HE'S THE RICHEST MAN IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM!
AND THAT'S HIS DAUGHTER, VALDORA, WITH HIM!
LOOKING AT THE VENUS GIRL MADE MY HEART POUND! SHE HAD STRANGE, EXOTIC BEAUTY!

AS CHIEF NAVIGATOR OF THE STARDUST, MY SEAT WAS AT THE CAPTAIN'S TABLE! SANTLEY AND VALDORA WERE SEATED THERE BESIDE CAPT. GRANT AND THE MARTIAN, SET GROF!
A GREAT PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU WITH US, MR. SANTLEY! AND NEVER HAVE I MET SUCH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL AS YOUR DAUGHTER!
ER... YES, QUITE SO!
YOU FLATTER ME, CAPTAIN GRANT!

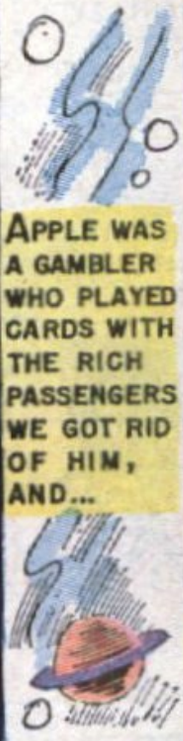
SANTLEY SEEMED LOST IN REVERIE! AND THE MARTIAN INVENTOR, SET GROF, WAS A SURLY FELLOW!
DID MY STEWARDS HANDLE THAT BIG BOX OF YOURS PROPERLY, SET GROF! WE WERE ALL WONDERING?...
WHAT IT IS CONCERNS ONLY ME, CAPTAIN GRANT!

AND WHEN WE MET...

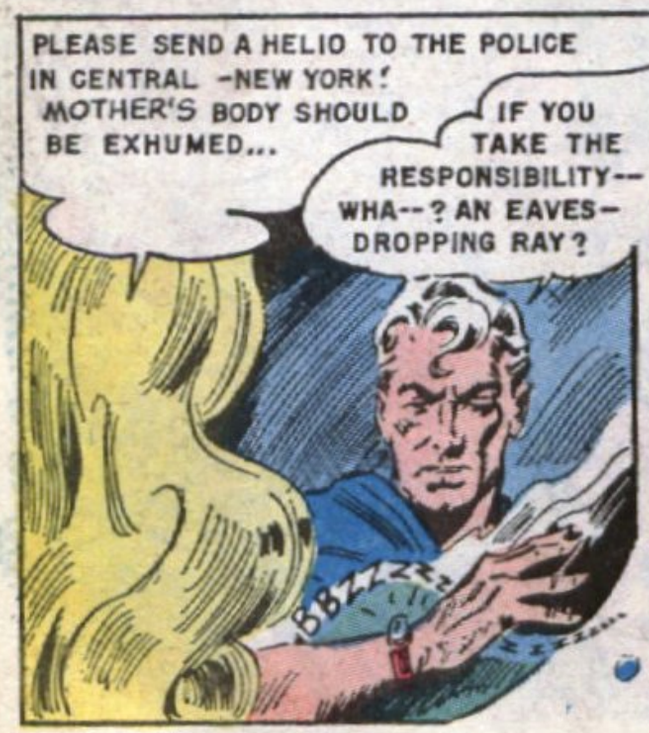
I M SANTLEY'S STEPDAUGHTER! WE NEVER SAW MUCH OF EACH OTHER AS I WAS AWAY AT SCHOOL. BUT SINCE MOTHER DIED A FEW WEEKS AGO... HE'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE... HIS MIND IS CLOUDY!

YOU VENUS GIRLS ARE ALL SUPPOSED TO BE PSYCHIC, BUT IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO GO ON?
MOTHER DIED SO STRANGELY- AND HE WON'T TALK ABOUT IT! THIS PUZZLES ME!

VALDORA WAS INTERRUPTED BY ONE OF THE PASSENGERS!
SHH! HERE COMES WILLIE APPLE, THE GOLD LEAF GAMBLER!
EVENIN' MISS VALDORA! SPACE LIGHT BECOMES YOU!
OHH!


APPLE WAS A GAMBLER WHO PLAYED CARDS WITH THE RICH PASSENGERS WE GOT RID OF HIM, AND...

I FEEL MOTHER DIDN'T DIE A NATURAL DEATH! I THINK SHE WAS MURDERED! AND THAT MARTIAN, SET GROF, FRIGHTENS ME! HE WAS AT OUR HOME OFTEN!
SHH! TALK SOFTLY TOWARD ME! THERE COULD BE AN EAVES-DROPPING RAY UPON US!


PLEASE SEND A HELIO TO THE POLICE IN CENTRAL -NEW YORK! MOTHER'S BODY SHOULD BE EXHUMED...
IF YOU TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY-- WHA--? AN EAVES-DROPPING RAY?
BBZZZZZ

AN EAVES-DROPPING RAY! ILLEGAL ON A SPACE SHIP! THEN IN THE SHADOWS I SAW A CLOAKED, HOODED FIGURE, AND...

HEY, YOU!
3

I CAUGHT HIM AS HE TRIED TO CROSS THE TURRET CATWALK, AND...
WHAT'S THE IDEA—USING AN EAVESDROPPER?
UGH!
BUT HE GOT AWAY! MY BLOW KNOCKED HIM FROM THE CAT-WALK! HE PICKED HIMSELF UP, AND FLED...
I TOOK VALDORA TO THE MAIN SALON, AND LEFT HER WITH SANTLEY! THEN I WENT TO CAPTAIN GRANT... DUSTY WAS THERE!
ONE OF THE PASSENGERS, PROBABLY! HE'D HIDE THAT CLOAK—HOW CAN WE IDENTIFY HIM?
WE COULD SEARCH EVERY-BODY!
CAN'T DO THAT WITH-OUT A POLICE SPACE WARRANT!
WAS THE EAVES-DROPPER WILLIE APPLE? OR THE MARTIAN, SET GROF? DUSTY SENT VALDORA'S REQUEST TO THE N.Y. POLICE, WHEN...
THAT DOES IT! TOLD 'EM TO RUSH THE AUTOPSY REPORT... OH, HELLO, SET GROF!
YOU JUST SENT EARTH A MESSAGE, DIDN'T YOU? I WANT YOU TO SEND ONE FOR ME!
HAD HE HEARD VALDORA TELL ME TO ORDER THAT AUTOPSY? AND NOW WAS HE SPYING ON DUSTY
?
I HAVE A GIRL IN CENTRAL-NEW YORK! SEND MY LOVE GREETING! WHA-? OH, I AM SORRY!
HEY, THERE!
YOUR SENDER AND RECEIVER ARE RUINED? SO SORRY! I SHALL PAY DAMAGES, OF COURSE!

DUSTY RE-WIRED AND RE-PAIRED THE HOOK-UP! ABOUT MIDNIGHT THE MESSAGE CAME.

SPACE-O-GRAPH

BODY OF MRS. SANTLEY SHOWS NEURIMIC ARSENA POISONING. ARREST WILLIE APPLE, FORMER PARTNER OF ESCAPED CRIMINAL GEORGE PETERS. STOP. LAND IMMEDIATELY ON THE MOON. GUARD VALDORA SANTLEY CAREFULLY. STAND BY.

SPACE POLICE

WHO'S THIS ESCAPED CRIMINAL, GEORGE PETERS?

MRS. SANTLEY WAS MURDERED! AND WE'RE TO GUARD VALDORA!

SET OUR COURSE FOR THE MOON! AND HAVE VALDORA SANTLEY SENT HERE TO--WHA?!

A!EEE!

AA!EEEEE!

WE RUSHED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SCREAM! AND--

WILLIE APPLE!

STABBED! MURDERED!

VALDORA -- THEY'LL KILL HER! I WOULDN'T MURDER-- TOL' PETERS--HE.. DID THIS TO ME! UHH--

DEAD! HE WAS IN THIS PLOT... AND THEY SILENCED HIM!

I REMEMBER PETERS, NOW! HE WAS IN SANTLEY'S EMPLOY, BUT COMMITTED A CRIME AND WENT TO JAIL!

WAS GEORGE PETERS ABOARD? I ALTERED OUR COURSE! AS THE MOON SWUNG UP LEVEL WITH OUR BOW, TWO PASSENGERS CALLED CAPTAIN GRANT!

YOU'RE HEADED FOR THE MOON! I HAVE URGENT BUSINESS ON MARS! I SHALL SUE!

I PROTEST! I AM BOOKED FOR MARS!

TELL THEM TO COME HERE AND DISCUSS IT! I WANT TO GET THEM OUT OF THEIR CABINS!

THEY AGREED TO COME! WE PUT A GUARD OVER VALDORA, AND THEN DUSTY AND I WENT TO SET GROF'S CABIN!

GROF HAS LOCKED HIS DOOR!

I'LL MELT THROUGH! PETERS IS HERE ON BOARD--SO WE'LL HAVE A LOOK AT GROF'S MYSTERIOUS BOX!

WE'LL SOON SEE WHAT'S INSIDE!

LISTEN! THE THING IS TICKING!

STOP! STOP!

TICK!

TICK!

SANTLEY HADN'T GONE AT ONCE TO THE CAPTAIN! HE BURST INTO GROF'S ROOM...

RS

THEN THE BANKER TURNED AND RAN WILDLY AWAY! WE OPENED THE BOX AND...
GROF! WE'RE DISCOVERED!
THAT'S PETERS! MY DOUBLE! LOOKS LIKE ME! HE KILLED MY WIFE... KIDNAPPED ME!
IT'S THE REAL SANTLEY!
PETERS HAS BEEN IMPERSONATING HIM!
LIKE MANY PROMINENT MEN THE BANKER HAD NEEDED A DOUBLE TO APPEAR FOR HIM AT VARIOUS FUNCTIONS! NOW THESE CRIMINALS WERE MAKING SANTLEY SIGN CHECKS, GRADUALLY SEIZING HIS FORTUNE...
HERE THEY COME, DUSTY!
LOOK OUT! THEY'RE ARMED!
YOU COULDN'T FOOL VALDORA! AND YOU'D HAVE KILLED HER, TOO!
MISSED GROF! THERE HE GOES, ALAN!
THE DESPERATE MARTIAN HEADED FOR AN ESCAPE PORT! EVIDENTLY HE THOUGHT HE COULD DON A SPACE SUIT!
HE MUST HAVE MISHANDLED THE PORT! MECHANISM!
GOT HURLED OUT! WITH NO SPACE SUIT —INSTANTLY ASPHIXIATED!
HELD BY THE STARDUST'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL, THE BODY OF SET GROF SLOWLY FOLLOWED US...
VALDORA AND I ARE MARRIED NOW! CAPTAIN GRANT OFTEN
LETS HER MAKE THE EARTH-MARS RUN WITH ME! SO FAR, THEY'VE BEEN UNEVENTFUL FLIGHTS!
THE END...

Ballast of GOLD
A HEAP TALE OF THE UNUSUAL
THIS IS A TRUE STORY OF A SHIP THAT CARRIED HUNDREDS OF PASSENGERS AND TWO MILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD! SHE WAS CRAMMED TO THE SCUPPERS AND DESTINED FOR A VOYAGE THAT WAS NEVER COMPLETED! THE GOOD SHIP CENTRAL AMERICA SAILED FROM HAVANA, PAST OLD MORRO AND HEADED FOR THE UNITED STATES... NOW READ THE ACCOUNT OF HER FINAL VOYAGE!
THE DATE IS SEPTEMBER 8, 1857. CAPTAIN HERNDON HEADS HIS SHIP TOWARD NEW YORK...
I'LL BE GLAD TO SEE THE LAST OF THESE ROUGH-NECKS! A DIRTY LOT...
AYE! AND ALL THAT GOLD ABOARD... GIVES A MATE THE CREEPS THINKIN' OF IT!
HAH-HAH! HOW'S THAT FER AN AIM? STICKIN' RIGHT INTO THE MAST!
BE CAREFUL, ROBERT. THE MEN MIGHT HURT YOU!
YER SCARIN' THE KID'S MAW. DON'T FLING 'EM WITHOUT YELLIN' FURST, PARDNER!

WHILE AT ANOTHER END OF THE DECK...
BLAST THE LUCK! HERE'S MY WHOLE POKE!
JOE'LL GO BACK TO THE STATES FLAT BROKE!
THAT'S HIS HARD LUCK! C'MON, DEAL 'EM OUT AGAIN!
TWO DAYS OUT AT SEA AND A FIERCE STORM STRIKES THE VESSEL...
NEVER GETS LIKE THIS ON A SAILING VESSEL! THESE STEAMERS ARE NO GOOD!
I NEVER SAW A BLOW AS BAD AS THIS ONE BEFORE!
UHHH! I'M SICK!
HM! SHE'S MAKING HEAVY WEATHER OF IT! AND SOME OF HER SEAMS...
AND ON THE MORNING OF THE ELEVENTH, THE SHIP'S SEAMS DO OPEN TO THE SEA...
WE'RE TAKING ON A LOT OF WATER, SIR! CAN'T LAST LONG!
DO WHAT YOU CAN! I'LL NOTIFY CAPTAIN HERNDON AT ONCE!
BUT SOON...
BEND YOUR BACKS, MEN! IT'S YOUR OWN LIVES YOU'RE SAVING!
I AM NOT ONE TO BE WEEPING, SIR, BUT IT LOOKS HOPELESS!
HOURS PASS AS THE CREW AND PASSENGERS BATTLE DESPERATELY FOR THEIR LIVES! TOSSED, SPUN AND BATTERED BY MERCILESS SEAS, THE SHIP IS SOON LITTLE MORE THAN A DRIFTING HULK. FAR BELOW THE DECK LEVEL A GRIMY AND FATIGUED BLACK GANG IS LOSING THEIR FIGHT...
AHOY! THE WATER'S GETTING HIGHER! CAN'T KEEP UP OUR FIRES! STEAM'S ALMOST GONE!
2

WHILE TOPSIDE...
HURRY, MEN! WE MUST TRY TO RIG A SEA ANCHOR!
STOP THAT KIND OF TALK AND BEND YOUR BACK!
WE'RE GOING TO SINK I TELL YOU!
OHH... I'M FRIGHTENED! I DON'T WANT TO DROWN!
HUSH YOUR WHINING, DEARIE, AND GIVE A HAND HERE WITH THIS BAILING!
FIRE THAT GUN EVERY MINUTE! AND KEEP THOSE ROCKETS GOING! WE'RE IN A BAD SITUATION, MEN, WE'VE GOT TO ALL WORK TOGETHER!
AYE, SIR! EVERY HAND IS DOING HIS BEST, SIR!
SUDDENLY THERE IS A CRY FROM THE RIGGING POINT...
A SAIL! A SAIL! AHOY BELOW! A SAIL! ON OUR PORT BOW! A SAIL!
AND ABOARD THE SAILING BRIG, "MARINE," HERSELF DAMAGED BY THE STORM...
THEY'VE GOT TO HUSTLE! WE CAN'T KEEP OUR POSITION LONG!
THEY'RE PUTTING OUT A BOAT, SIR!
PRAY! OH, PRAY FOR OUR LIVES!
PULL, MEN! IT'S US OR THE SEA NOW!
WE'LL SINK! WE'LL SINK!

TWO BOATLOADS! THERE WILL BE NO TIME FOR A THIRD. AND NOW I AM GOING BELOW A MOMENT!
BELOW, SIR? WHAT'S THE USE OF THAT, SIR?
CAPTAIN HERNDON GOES TO HIS CABIN, AND...
MY DRESS UNIFORM! AFTER ALL, I MUST BE DRESSED MY FINEST TO MEET DAVEY JONES... IF ONLY I COULD SAVE MORE LIVES!
WHILE ABOVE, ANOTHER BOAT TRIES TO REACH THE MARINE...
NO USE! SHE'S GOING! LOOK THERE ON THE BRIDGE! IT'S CAPTAIN HERNDON!
OH! HE'S WAVING! I CAN'T LOOK.
GOODBYE... GOODBYE...
SHE'S GONE! AND THE BRAVE CAPTAIN WITH HER! HE DID ALL HE COULD...
SO PERISHED THE CENTRAL AMERICA! FOUR-HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE OF HER CREW AND PASSENGERS WENT TO THE BOTTOM, TAKING WITH THEM THE TWO MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF GOLD WHICH WILL NEVER BE SPENT ON THIS SIDE OF ETERNITY...
THE END